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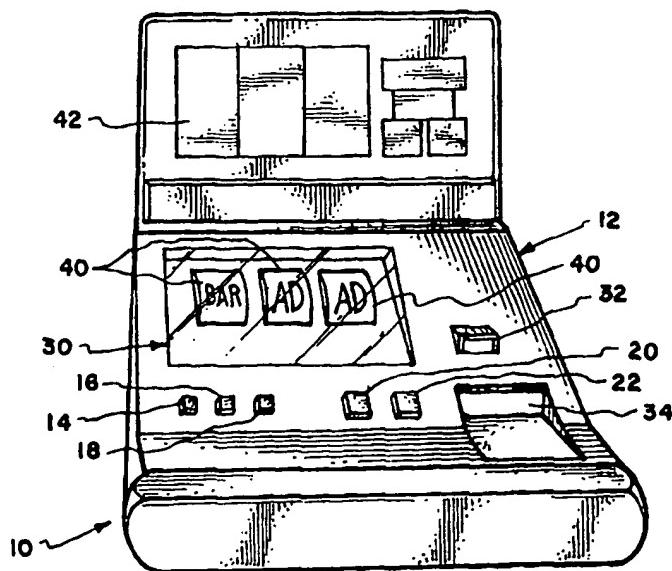
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(54) Title: SLOT MACHINES HAVING ADVERTISING DISPLAYS



(57) Abstract

In a gaming device (10) of the type that utilizes multiple rotatable wheels (40) or a video display to present a random combination of predetermined symbols and which issues a "win" indication of payout whenever one of several predetermined winning combinations of symbols is obtained, the provision of advertising messages which can be utilized in substitution for or in combination with the conventional symbols and the payout can be determined by a combination (42) of the conventional symbols with the advertising messages or other messages alone.

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SLOT MACHINES HAVING ADVERTISING DISPLAYS

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/077,039, filed March 6, 1998.

This invention relates to gaming devices which generate random combinations of symbols and provide a "win" indication if the random combination generated corresponds to one of a plurality of pre-determined winning combinations, and, more particularly, to a gaming device of the aforementioned character wherein advertising messages are interspersed between the symbols. In other words, instead of a random combination of symbols, the 10 gaming device will display advertising related to products, services, or the like.

Background of the Invention

The gaming devices under consideration here are commonly known as slot machines and can be broadly divided into two classes: namely, electro-mechanical devices which are energized by an elongated arm and video devices which are 15 energized by pressing one or more buttons on the housing of the device. In the electro-mechanical device, the aforementioned symbols are displayed on a plurality of wheels whereas, in the video device, the spinning of the wheels is simulated by the video circuitry.

Long habituation has resulted in the use of conventional symbols such as 20 various types of fruits or numerals. The present invention will be disclosed as utilized in a video slot machine, but it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that the invention can be applied to mechanical or electro-mechanical slot machines.

As is well known to those skilled in the art, a video slot machine has a display screen on which a simulation of three spinning wheels of the slot machine is presented. Each simulated wheel incorporates a plurality of game elements such as a "cherry", an "orange", a "BAR" or the like. The appearance of the 5 various symbols on the respective simulated wheels is determined by electronic circuitry which is commonly controlled by an electronic micro-processor.

Objects and Advantages of the Invention

An object of the present invention is to substitute a pre-determined number of the conventional symbols with advertising materials so that, during dwell time 10 of the machine, the advertising messages will be automatically displayed to an individual utilizing the machine. For instance, various products, such as soft drinks, cigarettes, or the like can be the subject of the advertising messages and the trademarks of the products can appear on each of the three video wheels of the machine.

15 Another object of the invention is the provision of advertising symbology on the wheels of a slot machine wherein the advertising symbology is integrated into the "win" circuitry of the machine so that one or more or all of the advertising symbology on the wheels of the machine can provide a pay-out in accordance with the pre-determined operational adjustment of the machine's circuitry.

20 For instance, an advertising symbol appearing on one wheel in conjunction with conventional symbology, such as cherries or bells on the other two wheels

can materially increase the pay-out to the player, thus engendering goodwill for the advertiser on the machine.

In addition, the appearance of the advertising symbology on all three wheels can result in a major pay-out of substantial sums of money to the player.

- 5 In this manner, the goodwill engendered by the pay-outs associated with the advertising symbology materially reinforces the advertising message which is displayed on the wheels of the machine.

Description of the Drawing

FIG. 1 is a view showing one embodiment of a slot machine
10 which can be modified to display advertising messages
on the video wheels thereof; and

FIG. 2 illustrates the manner in which advertisements on the
respective wheels of the machine can be interspersed
with conventional symbols.

15 Preferred Embodiment of the Invention

Referring to the drawings, and particularly to FIG. 1 thereof, I show a video-type slot machine 10 incorporated in a housing 12 and having a plurality of control buttons 14, 16, 18, 20, and 22 to control the video wheel display bank 30.

A slot 32 is provided for the reception of coins to initiate the operation of
20 the machine 10 and a delivery bin 34 is provided for the pay-outs.

Conventionally, three wheels 40 are provided in the bank 30 and are energized in various combinations determined by the utilization of the control buttons 14, 16, 18, 20, and 22.

Normally, when the bank 30 is operated, the wheels 40 will be spun
5 simultaneously and the spinning action of the individual wheels will terminate seriatim, that is, the first second and third wheels 40 stop one after the other.

As previously mentioned, the pay-outs are determined by the proprietor of the machines and are frequently displayed on the machine as at 42. Therefore, a player is made aware of what the individual pay-outs will be.

10 The operation of such machines is normally controlled by a micro-processor which generates signals that determine the number of increments each of the respective reels or wheels 40 will be advanced. Winning combinations include those corresponding to the unalterable symbology on the reels, such as the bell, plum, melon, star, etc. previously discussed. In the present machine, the
15 video circuitry has been modified to provide for the wheels 40 showing various advertising messages as represented by the word "AD" shown on the wheels 40 of FIG. 1. Alternatively, the winning combinations shown on the charts 42 will be modified to indicate the advertising combinations which will provide for a pay-out to the player.

20 For instance, the combination of all three wheels 40 having advertising messages thereupon, as shown in FIG. 1 of the drawings, will result in one of the larger or, perhaps, the largest pay-out made by the machine. Other pay-outs made

by the machine can include the presence of advertisements on one or two wheels in conjunction with the conventional symbology.

In these instances, for instance, the presence of one AD wheel 40 in conjunction with two conventional symbols can increase the pay-out above the
5 amount which would normally be paid if all three symbols were present.

Similarly, if two AD wheels are displayed in conjunction with a conventional symbol, a greater amount will be paid. Thus, the products advertised will be associated in the mind of a player with greater goodwill than that obtained by mere display in magazine, television, or other types of advertising.

10 The chart 60 of FIG. 2 is an illustration of the manner in which the advertising message can be displayed in conjunction with the conventional symbols. For instance, as illustrated, one, two, or three advertising messages on the wheels can display. The one and two messages can be displayed in conjunction with conventional symbols and the pay-out proportionately increased
15 until the triune display of the advertising messages results in the greater pay-out.

In addition, during the dwell time on the machine, a message is conveyed to passers-by or, initially, to a player approaching the machine for the first time. It should be noted that the principles of the invention can be applied with equal cogency to conventional mechanical or electro-mechanical slot machines,
20 although, of course, greater flexibility of combinations is achieved with the micro-processor of the machine 10.

It should be noted that the advertisers can confine their messages solely to the advertising function of the machine and that the gaming use of the ads is an additional aspect of the invention.

Claims

I claim:

1. In a gaming device of the type having means for generating a random combination of symbols, means defining a plurality of winning combinations of symbols, and means responsive to said random combination generating means and to said winning combination defining means for providing an indication of a win whenever the generated random combination corresponds to one of said winning combinations, the improvement comprising:

means for generating a plurality of advertising messages;

10 and

means for displaying said advertising messages, said advertising messages being displayable with one another or in conjunction with one or more of said symbols.

2. The gaming device of claim 1 in which the said symbols and said advertising messages are located upon a plurality of rotatable reels, said symbols and said messages having a predetermined value to establish a prize-winning combination.

3. The gaming device of claim 1 in which said symbols and advertising messages are video-generated images simulating the action of mechanical reels and in which, when said gaming device is disposed in a static mode, said advertising messages are presented for perusal.

4. In a gaming device for generating a random combination of symbols, means defining a plurality of winning combinations of symbols and means responsive to said random combination generating means and to said winning combination defining means for providing an indication of a win

5 whenever the generated random combination corresponds to one of said winning combinations, the improvement comprising:

a plurality of advertising messages displayable on said gaming device;

means for defining a plurality of winning combinations of messages; and

means responsive to said random combination-generating means and to said winning combination-defining means for providing an indication of a win whenever the generated random combination of messages corresponds to one of said winning combinations.

15 5. The gaming device of claim 1 in which said symbols and said advertising messages are displayed by means for interspersing or combining said symbols and said messages.

6. The devices of claims 4 or 5 incorporating means for sequential display of said advertising messages to the exclusion of said symbols.

7. In a method of operating a slot machine incorporating arbitrary symbols and advertising messages displayed on said machine, the steps of:

presenting a plurality of arbitrary, conventional symbols;

presenting a plurality of advertising messages; and,

simultaneously, energizing said symbols and said messages

to produce a winning combination of said symbols and said

5 messages.

8. The method of claim 7 in which the method includes the step of providing a winning combination of advertising messages.

9. The method of claim 7 in which static display means displays only said messages.

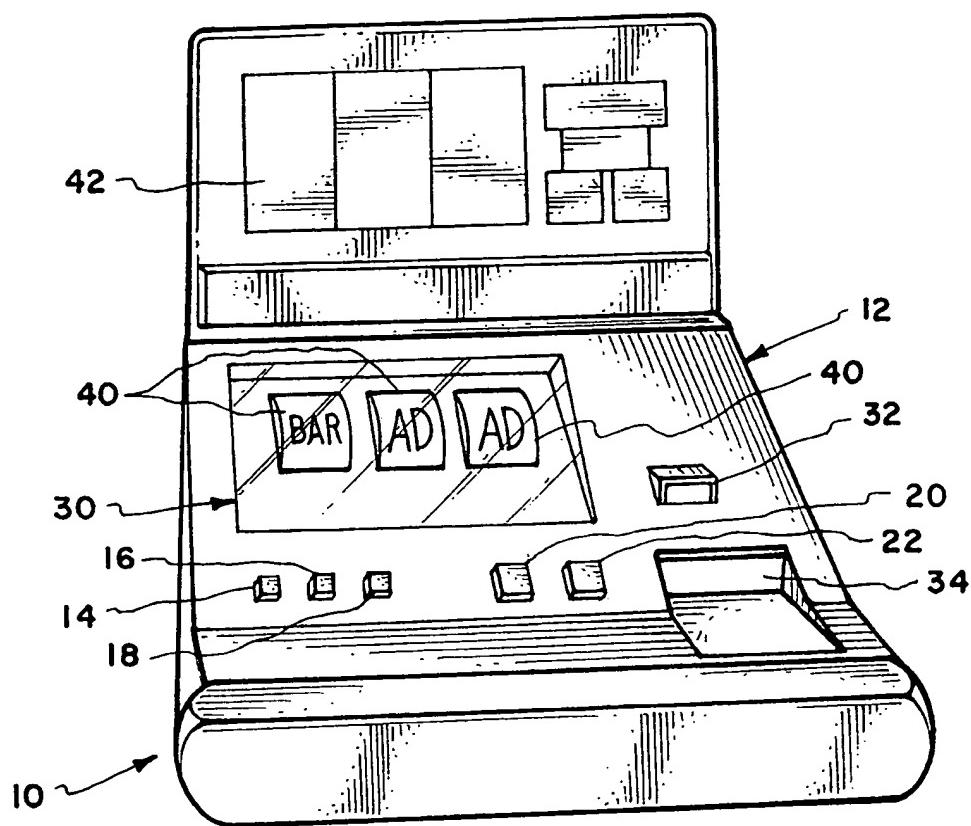


Fig. 1.

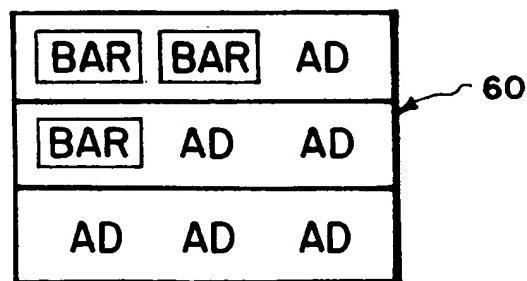


Fig. 2.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US99/04629

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(6) : IPC (6): G07F 17/34

US CL : US CL 463/16

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : US CL 463/16; 273/138.1; 273/143R

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched
noneElectronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
none

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|-----------|---|-----------------------|
| X | GB 2,086,115 A (Lloyd et al.) 06 May 1982, see entire document | 1, 3 |
| --- | | ----- |
| Y | | 2, 4-7 |
| Y | GB 2,083,936 A (Hurst et al.) 31 March 1982, see page 2, col.1, lines 12-33 and col.2, lines 114-117. | 1-7 |
| Y | Pollack, Judann, "Start-up Seeks to Put Brand Logos On Slots", Advertising Age, 21 July, 1998, see entire one page newspaper article. | 1-7 |
| Y | Kozlowski, Martin, "New Home For The Camel? Atlantic City Casinos Open A New Ad Medium - The Slot Machine", Advertising Age, 28 July, 1997, see one page editorial cartoon. | 1-7 |

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

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C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|
| Y | Fey, Marshall "Slot Machines - A Pictorial History of the First 100 Years of The World's Most Popular Coin-Operated Gaming Device", Liberty Belle Books, copyright 1994, see pages 2, 3, 94, 95, 101, 106, 156, 157 and 188 as marked. | 1-7 |